

Seniors adopt social sites

Social site use has soared among seniors. A third of American seniors (34%) now use social media sites, up from just 9% in 2007. Seniors report similar increases with social networking sites with 40% of seniors using social networking online, a 208% increase over 2007 (13%).

Getting answers using ask-an-expert sites also increased by triple-digit growth among American seniors. A third (32%) of seniors use online reference to seek assistance with their information searches, an increase of 300% from five years ago. Finding answers via ask-a-librarian question services has not taken off with seniors; use is just 3%, down slightly from 2005.

Seniors have caught up with younger Americans in their use of e-mail and search engines. Five years ago Americans ages 65+ showed substantial usage of e-mail (69%) and search engines (59%) but lagged behind younger age groups. Five years later, Americans 65+ now use e-mail (92%), search engines (86%) and other online information sources at similar or even higher rates than the younger generations.

Use of online bookstores and news sites has also increased for seniors. Today, two-thirds of seniors use online bookstores (69%) and online news sites (66%)—an increase from 41% for both sources—exceeding use among the 14–17-year-olds for online bookstores (58%) and online news sites (60%), and exceeding use among 25–64-year-olds for online news sites (64%).

Seniors’ use of social sites soars

Although still behind the younger generations, seniors’ use of social sites has soared in the last three years.

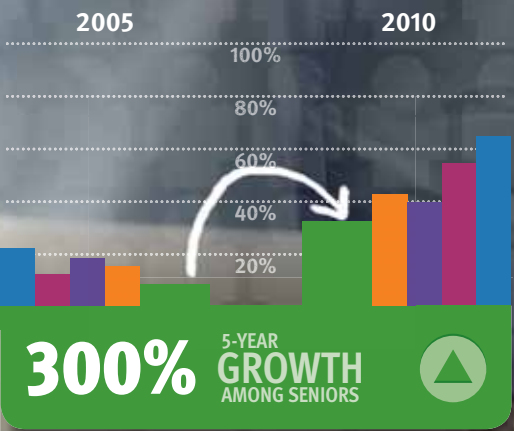
Social networking



Social media



Ask-an-expert



- AGE 14-17
- AGE 18-24
- AGE 25-45
- AGE 46-64
- AGE 65+

Seniors have made substantial lifestyle changes

Though fewer seniors, just 7%, reported employment status impacted by the economy, they are concerned about their futures, healthcare and retirement savings and have therefore made substantial lifestyle changes due to the economy.

Most seniors are concerned about healthcare (78%), government aid (62%), finances (57%) and retirement (48%). As expected, senior Americans expressed higher levels of concern for healthcare and government aid compared to the younger generations. As a consequence, seniors have made lifestyle changes. Half of American seniors ages 65+ have reduced spending on dining out, and 40% or more of them have reduced spending on books, CDs, DVDs (40%) and entertainment (42%).

Sixteen percent (16%) of American seniors increased their library use as a result of the tough economic times. Among these library users, most (84%) are borrowing books, CDs and DVDs more often; a quarter are attending meetings/community events (26%) and reading magazines (25%); and some are attending educational training programs (18%) and accessing the Internet (16%) more often.

Seniors' top advice to libraries is to increase hours. They were the age group most likely to be satisfied with their library experience, with 14% saying no improvements to the library were needed. Senior Americans' request to libraries: "Always be there."

Profile Seniors (Age 65+)

- 7%** ARE ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED
- 76%** CONSIDER THEMSELVES A READER

At the library

- 63%** HAVE A LIBRARY CARD
- 56%** VISIT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUALLY
- 21%** HAVE EVER USED THE LIBRARY WEB SITE
- 13%** ACCESS FREE INTERNET ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY
- 12%** USE A COMPUTER ANNUALLY AT THE LIBRARY
- 86%** BELIEVE THE LIBRARIAN ADDS VALUE TO SEARCH PROCESS
- 84%** ARE SATISFIED WITH OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH LIBRARIAN

Seniors: 65+-year-olds

- Had the highest growth (278%) in the use of social media sites—34% use these sites
- Are more likely to use online bookstores (69% vs. 58%) and online news sites (66% vs. 60%) compared to 14–17-year-olds
- Expressed strongest concern about healthcare (78%) and government aid (62%)
- Are most likely to say they are satisfied with the library as is when asked to provide advice to the library (14%)

Seniors are using...

- 92%** E-MAIL
- 86%** SEARCH ENGINES
- 60%** WIKIPEDIA
- 40%** SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
- 34%** SOCIAL MEDIA SITES
- 32%** ASK-AN-EXPERT SITES
- 2%** MOBILE DEVICES TO SEARCH WEB

Seniors advise libraries

Seniors are the most satisfied with the library as is, but they also want libraries to extend their hours.

23% Increase customer service.

- 11% Extend hours
- 5% Re-examine rules
- 4% Add staff/more knowledgeable helpful staff
- 3% Promote the library/advertise more

“Better hours however with the economy I am thankful that you are there at all ”
73-YEAR-OLD ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED

“Hire people that like people and are enthusiastic about their job ”
68-YEAR-OLD

15% Add or update services.

- 8% Add/update collection
- 4% Add/update computers
- 2% Make services available online
- 1% Add programs/classes

“More large print books. ”
69-YEAR-OLD

“Get more computers.”
65-YEAR-OLD ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED

“Seek funding to ensure funding to purchase up-to-date books computers and learning materials. ”
64-YEAR-OLD

14% I'm satisfied with my library.

“Always be there...”
77-YEAR-OLD

“Continue as you are.”
91-YEAR-OLD

8% Improve the facility and environment.

- 7% Renovate/expand facility
- 1% Study areas/meeting rooms/seating/café

“Our local library needs some much needed sprucing up.”
71-YEAR-OLD

“Put up ‘street signs’ for navigation”
68-YEAR-OLD

“Nicer atmosphere.”
75-YEAR-OLD ECONOMICALLY IMPACTED

